

MONROE ELECTRIC NEWS

Waterloo, Illinois • 618.939.7171 • 800.757.7433

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 



Alan W. Wattles

Across The President's Desk



ATTENTION! 5 - \$500 scholarships available!

Monroe County Electric Co-Operative, Inc. (MCEC) will be offering 5 - \$500 scholarships this year to high school seniors who are the sons or daughters of our cooperative members. Applications will soon be available on our website for these scholarships.

The winners of these five scholarships will be drawn at our Annual Meeting of Members in June. The high school seniors entering must be present at the annual meeting to win.

Watch our publications, website and Facebook page next month for more details.

Youth to Washington Contest

Attention high school juniors who are cooperative members!

Monroe County Electric Co-Operative (MCEC) is inviting two high school juniors, **who are the sons or daughters of MCEC members**, from each of the following schools to Youth Day in Springfield on April 5: Waterloo, Gibault, Valmeyer, Columbia, Dupo, Freeburg, New Athens, Red Bud and Belleville West. This contest is sponsored by MCEC and the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives. Of the participants representing MCEC in Springfield, one will be selected to go on an all-expense paid tour of Washington, D.C. in June.

Youth Day (Springfield – Wednesday, April 5, 2017): The day's activities will include touring the State Capitol complex, Illinois Supreme Court, Old State Capitol and the new Abraham

Lincoln Presidential Museum. Students will also have the opportunity to visit with legislators.

Youth to Washington Tour (June 9 - 16, 2017):

The one local winner from Youth Day will join some 60 other Illinois students sponsored by Illinois cooperatives, and spend a week in Washington, D.C. visiting attractions such as the White House (possible), U.S. Capitol, Smithsonian Institution, Arlington National Cemetery, Lincoln Memorial and many other national monuments and places of interest.

If you are a high school junior who receives electric service from Monroe County Electric, and this opportunity



interests you, please discuss this with your guidance counselor today. Students are required to be sons or daughters of MCEC members to enter this contest and to attend Youth Day. An application and informative brochure will be available soon regarding MCEC's Youth to Washington program and can be downloaded from our website at www.mcec.org.

10 new habits for a new year

New Year's resolutions to save energy and keep you safe

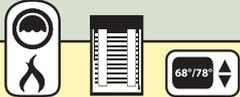
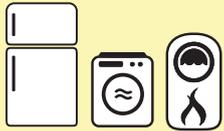
New Year's resolutions are all about habits—either breaking bad ones, like biting your nails, or forming new ones, like exercising daily. Here are some new habits to form that could help you save energy (and money) all year long.

1. Change furnace and air conditioner filters monthly. It's so easy to forget this, consider making it an alert in your phone or calendar.
2. Check your GFCI outlets monthly. Verify they are working correctly to protect from electric shock in bathrooms, kitchens and outdoor outlets.
3. Unplug phone and tablet chargers. Chargers and items with a clock or remote use power even when not in use.
4. Set the washer and dishwasher to use only the options you need and run full loads. While you're making changes try using cold water for clothes and air dry for dishes.
5. Stop using extension cords permanently. Have an extra outlet installed if you need one.
6. Ideally, leave the thermostat at 68 or less in the winter and 78 or more in the summer. Use blankets and fans as needed to stay comfortable.
7. Consider the operation cost with every purchase of a new appliance, electronic, or even light bulb. Consider it as part of the purchase price to help make your decision.
8. Know what to do in case a large storm causes an extended power outage. Make an emergency kit.
9. Plan ahead and call JULIE. It's the law to call 8-1-1 before digging.
10. Stay informed! Read this monthly magazine, visit our website at www.mcec.org, and like our Facebook page for energy efficiency and safety information.




Invest in Efficiency

The benefits of some home efficiency investments aren't seen as quickly as others. Here's how a few upgrades compare over time:

	<p>Set Water Heater to 120° No Cost; Save \$73/yr</p> <p>Open Window Blinds in Winter; Close in Summer No Cost; Save \$35/yr</p> <p>Adjust Thermostat 1° Down in Winter, 1° Up in Summer No Cost; Save \$82/yr</p>	Instant Benefit
	<p>ENERGY STAR Clothes Washer Costs \$194 extra; Save \$140/yr</p> <p>ENERGY STAR Refrigerator Costs \$97 extra; Save \$100/yr</p> <p>Wrap Hot Water Tank Costs \$85; Save \$23/yr</p>	
<p>Upgrade to ENERGY STAR Heat Pump (From 10 to 15 SEER) Costs \$5,700; Save \$408/yr</p>	Long Term Investment	
<p>Find more ways to save at TogetherWeSave.com.</p>		
<p><small>Source: U.S. Department of Energy Home Energy Saver, Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives. Based on national average savings; actual savings will vary by climate.</small></p>		

Source: Whirlpool Corporation

Be prepared for winter storms

By Abby Berry

When winter temperatures drop and storms hit, it can be challenging to stay safe and warm. Winter storm severity varies depending on where you live, but nearly all Americans are affected by extreme winter storms at some point. Monroe County Electric cares about your safety, and we want you to be prepared.

Heavy snow and ice can lead to downed power lines, leaving co-op members without power. During extremely low temperatures, this can be dangerous. During a power outage, our crews will continue to work as quickly and safely as possible to restore power, but there are a few things you can do to prepare yourself.

- **Stay warm** – Plan to use a safe alternate heating source, such as a fireplace or wood-burning stove during a power outage. These are great options to keep

you and your loved ones warm, but exercise caution when using, and never leave the heating source unattended. If you are using gasoline-, propane- or natural gas-burning devices to stay warm, never use them indoors. Remember that fuel- and wood-burning sources of heat should always be properly ventilated. Always read the manufacturer's directions before using.

- **Stay fed** – The CDC recommends having several days' supply of food that does not need to be cooked handy. Crackers, cereal, canned goods and bread are good options. Five gallons of water per person should also be available in the event of an extended power outage.

- **Stay safe** – When an outage occurs, it usually means power lines are down. It is best not to travel during winter storms, but if you must, bring a survival kit along, and do not travel alone. If you encounter downed lines, always assume they are live. Stay as far away from the downed lines as possible, and report the situation to our dispatchers by calling 939-7171 or 1-800-757-7433 if possible.

Winter weather can be unpredictable and dangerous, and planning ahead can often be the difference between life and death. Monroe County Electric is ready for what Mother Nature has in store, and we want you to be ready, too. For more winter safety tips, visit www.ready.gov/winter-weather.

MCEC line outages - November 2016

Date	Duration	# Out	Location	Cause Desc	Substation
10/31/16	3:44	182	Wildwood Lake Estates	Vehicles Or Machinery	Smithton
11/03/16	1:27	46	Maus/Grant Rd	Other, Faulty Equipment	Fults
11/11/16	0:56	2	Sand Rock Rd	Vehicles Or Machinery	Smithton
11/14/16	1:38	4	Chaffin Bridge	Unknown	Fults
11/18/16	2:59	534	Fults	Vehicles Or Machinery	Fults
11/18/16	2:41	17	Floraville Rd	Weather, Other	N. Waterloo
11/18/16	3:08	71	Fults	Vehicles Or Machinery	Fults
11/18/16	4:02	125	Monroe City	Trees, Other	Waterloo
11/18/16	0:52	83	Fults	Vehicles Or Machinery	Fults

Monroe County Electric Co-Operative, Inc.

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618-939-7171

Office hours: Monday through Friday 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

800-757-7433

Why does my electric bill go up in the winter?

The amount of your electric bill is dependent solely on how much electricity you use. Except for rate 16, Monroe County Electric's rates are the same year round, so if your bill gets larger in the winter, it's because you are using more electricity. Determining where it is being used is essential to reducing your bill.

The colder it is outside, the more energy it takes to keep our homes warm. When it's 70 degrees out, your heating system doesn't have to work to keep it 70 degrees indoors. When the temperature drops to 10 degrees outside, your heating system has to work very hard to keep it 70 degrees indoors.

Take a look around your home to see what types of devices you use to keep your home warm. If you have electric heat, whether baseboard heaters, electric furnace or a heat pump, you know where it's going. If you have a gas furnace though, you might not think your electric usage would increase. Remember, the more your furnace runs, the more the blower runs and it runs on electricity.

Even if you have gas heat, you may have some portable electric heaters to keep certain rooms warm. Just remember though, portable electric heaters are meant for warming small areas for short periods of time, not entire houses, all of the time. No matter what the ads say, all portable electric heaters have the same efficiency as an electric furnace and use the same amount of electricity.

Electric blankets will also increase electric usage. You may also have some electric heat tapes on water lines to keep them from freezing.

Here are some tips to help reduce your electric usage.

Heat Pumps

Heat pumps are very efficient heating systems. If the heat pump malfunctions however, they become electric furnaces and can lead to high electric usage. Verify the outdoor unit is functioning on a weekly basis by listening to it run or by observing that its fan is operating. Keep filters clean and make sure the coils on

the unit outside are clean as well. Do not turn the thermostat up and down on a heat pump, this will cause the auxiliary heat strips to provide more of the heat than they need to. If you wish it to be cooler at night or to set it back when absent, use a programmable thermostat designed for heat pumps. They can raise the temperature without causing the auxiliary heat strips to come on.

Space Heaters

Use electric space heaters to only heat small areas for short periods of time, such as reading the paper or watching television. All space heaters are created equal, in other words, none or more efficient than any other, no matter what the ads say.

Showers

Make sure showers are no longer than they need to be. It's easy to wake up under a warm shower in the morning, but that causes your water heater to operate more than needed. Pay attention to children's showers and time them if necessary. Make sure you have low-flow showerheads in place.

Laundry

With new laundry detergents, washing machines and fabrics, hot or even warm water is not necessary to get clothing clean. Use cold water washing for all but the dirtiest clothing. Don't overload the machine, but do use full loads.

Dish Washing

Wash only full loads of dishes and then use the water heat option on the cycle with no drying. This allows you to set your water heater to 120 degrees (more than adequate for household and laundry use) yet have water that gets your dishes clean. With the warmer water in the machine, you won't need to use the dry cycle, especially if you'll crack the door when the cycle is done.

SmartHub

While our on-line access to your energy usage won't directly save you energy, you can't control what you can't measure.



With SmartHub, our on-line account portal to your energy usage, you can see how much energy you used yesterday (the system updates the information around noon each day). If your energy usage suddenly takes a spike, there may be a problem you can fix before you get the bill at the end of the month. You can also use the Budget Gauge (under Billing & Payments section) to input a dollar amount you would like to keep your bill at. By periodically checking the gauge, you can see whether you are staying within your budget or if you will miss it.

While these tips will help reduce energy usage, making sure your home is properly insulated and air-sealed will provide the greatest energy savings. In addition to saving money and energy, a properly insulated and sealed home will also be more comfortable and healthy. Your cooperative can help you figure out if your home is insulated and sealed adequately with an energy audit. A comprehensive audit that includes a blower door, infra-red camera scan, photos and physical inspection followed with a written report and recommendations is free to our members. If you don't believe you need a comprehensive audit, a walk through audit is also available at no charge. This audit is just as it sounds, we'll walk through the home, peak into the attic and crawlspace if present, and verbally inform you of some things you might consider. No written report will be made.